

Responsorial Psalm Response

Ps 71:102.7-8.12-13.17 R cf.v. 7

Justice shall flourish in his time,
And fullness of peace for ever.**Gospel Acclamation****Alleluia, Alleluia!**Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight his paths:
All people shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia!**WEEKEND MASSES****Epping** 5:00pm Vigil, 8:30am, 10:15am, 6:00pm**Carlingford** 6:00pm Vigil, 7:45am, 9:30am**WEEKDAY MASSES**

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	
EPPING	No Mass	12:15pm	9:15am	12:15pm	12:15pm	9:15am	Communion Service
CARLINGFORD	9:30am	No Mass	9:30am	9:30am	9:30am	No Mass	Communion Service

HEALING MASS Carlingford—1st Thursday, Epping — 3rd Wednesday**EXPOSITION OF THE EUCHARIST:** Epping Saturday 9:45-10:15am, Carlingford, 4th Thursday 10:00am**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:** Epping Saturday 9:45-10:15am Carlingford Saturday 5:00—5:30pm
OR BY APPOINTMENT**BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS: BY APPOINTMENT****PARISH OFFICE:** 29 Oxford Street, Epping NSW 2121 **PH:** 9876 2853 **Email:** parish@eppcarl.org.au**ST GERARD MAJELLA PRIMARY SCHOOL:** **PH:** 9871 1633 **Email:** sgc@dbb.catholic.edu.au**OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTANS PRIMARY SCHOOL:** **PH:** 9868 3322 **Email:** olhc@dbb.catholic.edu.au**Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of Everlasting life. Grant that life to:****Recently deceased:** Sandra (Sandy) Bradley, Daphne North, Mary Carroll, Tony de Luca, Luisa Guareschi, Monica Courtenay, Marlangela Ferragina, Alexander Steuerwald.*Please pray for Patricia Frear who died last week**Her funeral will be held on Friday 13th December at 10:30am at Our Lady Help of Christians' Epping***Anniversaries:** Anthony Fernandes.**Also for:** Young Hwan Ho, Yong Min Ho, Young Seok Seo, Soo Woog Jin, Maria Hur,**Please pray for those who are sick:** Sean Huhse, Joel Steinberg, Patricia Rumble, Dean Pan, John Davies, Nicole Greenfield, Michael Furlong, Saulius Dovydas Balsya, Residents of Wesley Rayward Nursing Home, Mark Di Palma, Anthony Conlon, Andrew Hannam, The Craig Family, Fr Mick Court, Margaret Maher, Anna & Leo Bruzze, Gerhard Stieger, Dorothea Ellis, Rebecca Lawler, Ben Thornton, Elaine Finlayson, Jan Doherty, Brian Walsh, Patricia O'Connor, Kathy Noonan, Alice Eng, Peck Quah, Dorothy Bonaccorso, Narelda & Alan Ryan, Kit Smith, Margaret Floyd, Peter Baker, Bev Aliprandi, Barbara Madafiglio, Greg Walsh, John Gilbert, Stella Nathan, Catherine Walsh, Brendan Stone, Melanie Loudoun, Mary Wijewardana, Elaine Hunt, Arnold Day, Maureen Carlon, Fr Adrian Borst, Augustine Hong, Luba Charlton, George Khouri, Antony Hogan, Ingrid Connor, Steve Toth, Martin & Gay Flood, William Jones, Nicholas Rajanayagen, Maria Lee, Patricia Muschalik, Delma Soria, Sr Abanasia Lee, Maria Belisario, Stella, Edwards, Fara Vargas, Theo Stevens, Monica Weeden, Thomas Woodward, Wai Chun Wong, Heather Stoodley, Sr Pauline Wicks rsj, Charles Barton.*Due to privacy laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.***AFTER HOURS SICK CALLS— 9876 2853**

Outside office hours our office phones divert to Fr Peter and Fr Bogdan at home.

In the event that they are unavailable, their answering machines will record your message or ring the number given in the message. However, if possible please restrict routine enquiries to office hours.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Our parish is strongly committed to ecumenism and a formal Covenant has been signed with the Anglican Parish of Epping, Epping Uniting Church, West Epping Uniting Church and Epping Baptist Church.

Date	Mass	Epping	Mass	Carlingford
14/12/19	5:00pm	Fr Peter Dowd	6:00pm	Fr Bogdan Skupien
15/12/19	8:30am	Fr Peter Dowd	7:45am	Fr Bogdan Skupien
15/12/19	10:15am	Fr Peter Dowd	9:30am	Fr Bogdan Skupien
15/12/19	6:00pm	Fr Bogdan Skupien		

**The Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford
Diocese of Broken Bay****Our Lady Help of Christians' Church**

31 Oxford Street, Epping and

**St Gerard Majella Church**

543 North Rocks Road, Carlingford

Parish Priest: Fr Peter Dowd,**Ph.:** 9876 2853**Email:** peter@eppcarl.org.au**Parish Office: 02 9876 2853****Assistant Priest: Fr Bogdan Skupien****Ph.:** 9872 3400**Email:** Bogdan.Skupien@bbcatholic.org.au**Email:** parish@eppcarl.org.au**Parish Website:** www.bbcatholic.org.au/epppingcarlingford**Welcome to our Parish of Epping and Carlingford** consisting of our two worshipping communities of St Gerard Majella's at Carlingford and Our Lady Help of Christians at Epping. If you are new to the area or visiting today we are glad that you are with us, and we hope that our celebrations of the Eucharist together will provide both nourishment and challenge on your Christian journey.**YEAR A****SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT****8-12-19****Isaiah 11:1-10****Romans 15:4-9****Matthew 3:1-12**

Dear sisters and brothers,

Last Tuesday our new assistant priest Fr Bogdan arrived here in the parish and has begun to settle in. My special thanks to the office staff and other parishioners who are assisting him as he gets his feet on the ground here in the parish.

Along with Fr Joey, Fr Bogdan was already booked in as a chaplain before his new appointment to our parish was announced last month, to assist other clergy and members of our diocese who left for Perth last Friday for the youth conference that is taking place there this coming week. As a consequence, we are welcoming some visiting priests to assist with Masses here in the parish this weekend. A special welcome to each one of you!

Due to some last-minute changes that were required to be made in the priest roster for this weekend, I apologise that our schedule will differ slightly from the one advertised in last weekend's bulletin.

Also, a reminder that during Advent our parish scripture group continues to meet at Carlingford on Fridays after the morning Mass in the parish meeting room to reflect on the coming Sundays scripture readings. Everyone is welcome!

Finally, with all the busyness leading up to Christmas, please keep the evening of December 18th free for our parish celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Along with Fr Bogdan and myself, there will be a couple of visiting priests joining us that evening...it would be great to see as many of you there as possible as we prepare as a parish family for the coming feast of Christmas.

Fr Peter

Christmas Mass Times**CHRISTMAS EVE: TUESDAY, 24 DECEMBER**Family Masses in both our Churches
Carlingford 5pm Vigil
Epping 6pm Vigil

As part of our support for Vinnies Christmas Appeal we invite the children to consider bringing a monetary gift rather than foodstuff to the Mass. The children will be invited to bring their gift forward and place it in a box near the Christmas tree during the Mass.

Carlingford:

Night Mass will commence at 10:00pm preceded by Carols at 9:30pm.

Epping:

Midnight Mass preceded by Carols at 11:30pm.

**CHRISTMAS MORNING: WEDNESDAY,
25TH DECEMBER****Carlingford:**

7:45am Mass & 9:30am Mass

Epping:8:30am Mass & 10:15am Mass
NO 6pm Mass**THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**The Second Rite of Reconciliation will be celebrated for both our parishes on **Wednesday, 18th December at 7:30pm** at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church, Epping.

Please note that there will be the opportunity for Reconciliation before Christmas on:

Saturday 21st December at 9:45am at Epping and also **5:00pm** at Carlingford.Monday **23rd December after the 9:30am Mass** at Carlingford

Parish Mission Statement

We are a diverse Catholic community centred in the Eucharist. We gather for worship to serve and reach out to others as we grow in relationship with God and each other.

Safeguarding Message December 2019

We the people of the Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford are committed to fostering communities of safety and care for all people, especially for children and others in the community who are vulnerable. Our commitment is underscored by our faith in Jesus Christ



CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDREN'S MASSES

All children are invited to take part in the Christmas Vigil Masses (5 pm at St Gerard's and 6 pm at OLHC on Christmas Eve in both churches.) We would like volunteers for many roles. We also need parent volunteers to assist at the practices, during the Mass and with supper.

The children participating in the Mass will be required to attend practices.
Parent helpers will also be required to attend.

Carlingford:
Parent run-through & dress rehearsal for Gospel mime
Saturday 21st December 10am - 11am
Readers: **Saturday 21st December 11am—11:30am**

Epping:
Parent run-through & dress rehearsals
Thursday 12th Dec. & 19th Dec. 4:00pm - 5.00pm .

Any questions? Please email:
Lynn for Carlingford stgchildrenmass@gmail.com
Therese for Epping olhcchildrenmass@gmail.com

--Please detach and return no later than **8th December**--

Epping / Carlingford

(Please circle which church you will be attending)

Please provide order of preference for each child for roles from Gospel mime, readings and processions. Although we try to give everyone his or her first preference, it is not always possible

Child's Name	Age	Role

Parents: I am / am not able to assist with practices & during Mass
I am / am not able to assist with packing away sup per after Mass

Parent's name: _____

Email Contact: _____
Confirmation of roles etc. will be notified via email



CATECHIST CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

2019 is drawing to a close, some of our primary and secondary state schools have finished their Special Religious Education (SRE) classes and our catechists came together for a "Thanksgiving" lunch on 29 November at Carlingford attended by Fr Joey. We recognised and thanked our catechists for their continuous services with the presentation of CCD Service Awards during our Catechists Mass on 1st December at Our Lady Help of Christians: Praveena Kurian—5 years, Cyril Tumminello—25 years, Fr Joey, Donah D'Silva—5 years). The top right photo was taken after our Children's Mass in October, a tribute to all the catechists who are very generous with their time, effort and love for our children, the future of our Faith.



CHARITABLE WORKS FUND APPEAL

The second CWF Appeal for this Financial Year continues this weekend.

Shortfall after the fifth week \$5,987

Envelopes can be found at the entrances to the churches. Please give generously as any shortfall from this appeal will have to be made up from normal parish funds – please support the appeal so that we can avoid this happening. Our Parish quota for this Appeal is \$18,577.

National Drought Prayer

Eternal God,
in wisdom and love
you created our earth
to sustain us and give us life.

We turn to you now
in faith, hope and love,
asking you to look with favour
on our drought-stricken land,
on our starving animals,
on our failing crops.

Strengthen, sustain and give
new heart to our farmers
and to all who are affected
by drought:
be with those who support them.

In your loving providence,
send abundant rain and
restore our parched earth.

Father of all compassion,
hear our prayer
through Jesus Christ your Son,
in whom the promise of new life
has dawned, and through the
power of the Holy Spirit,
the Lord the giver of life:

Renew your faithful people:
Renew the face of the earth.

Our Lady of the Southern Cross,
Mary, help of Christians –
Pray for us.
St Mary of the Cross MacKillop
Pray for us.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven, (all bow)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Have You Told Us? If you have recently changed your address, phone number or email. For parishioners who give by credit card, does your credit card expire in the near future? Please give the parish office a call on 9876 2853 if you have received a new credit card and/or a new expiry date.

Admitted to Hospital

A reminder that if you are admitted to hospital, please try to ensure that you write down your religion as Catholic on the admission form, so that you can receive Catholic services during your stay.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council
www.thecouncil.org.au



Awesome service. Amazing results.

Betty Ockerlander
bettyockerlander@mcgrath.com.au
0408 505 080

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ursula@k6tutoring.com.au
www.k6tutoring.com.au

Reflection on this Sunday's Gospel—The God Who is Revealed in Christmas

Christmas is God's answer to human longing, God's response to the centuries of prayers that lay hidden in our groaning, in our sighs, our frustrations, and our religious efforts, each of them a plea, mostly silent, for a divine intervention, all of them asking God to come and rid the world of injustice and our hearts of loneliness and heart-ache.

But God's answer didn't exactly meet our expectations even as it surpassed them. What was born with Jesus' birth and what still lies seemingly helpless in manglers all around the world wasn't exactly what the world expected.

What the world expected was a superstar, someone with the talent, sharpness, and raw muscle-power to out-gun everything that's bad on this planet, someone charismatic enough to make everyone who opposes him slink away in defeat. God's answer to that: A baby lying helpless in the straw!

Why?

Why would God choose to be born into the world in this way?

The power of God revealed in Christmas is the power of a baby, nothing more. Because you can't argue with a baby! Babies don't try to compete, don't stand up to you, don't try to best you in an argument, and don't try to impress you with their answers. Indeed, they can't speak at all. You, on your part, have to coax everything out of them, be it a smile or a word, and that effort, which demands great patience, usually draws out what's best in you. Moreover, you can't push at a baby too hard, it will begin to cry and the session is over. And that is the Saviour who was born in Bethlehem, and that is how God is still basically in the world. Like a baby. God does not outgun anyone, out-muscle anyone, threaten anyone, or overpower anyone. The power of God revealed in Christmas is the power of a baby, nothing more, nothing less: innocence, gentleness, helplessness, a vulnerability that can soften hearts, invite in, have us hush our voices, teach us patience, and call forth what's best in us. We watch our language around a baby in the same way as we watch our language in a church, with good reason.

The power of Christmas is like the power of a baby, it underwhelms in such a way as to eventually overwhelm. There is a greater power than muscle, speed, charism, unstoppable force: if you were to put a baby into a room with the heavy-weight boxing champion of the world, who ultimately would be the stronger? The boxer could kill the baby, but, no doubt, wouldn't, precisely because something inside the baby's powerlessness would overwhelm the boxer. Such is the way of God, the message of Christmas.

But we have always been slow to understand this. We want our messiahs to possess more immediate power. And we are in good company here. The messiah that people longed for during all those centuries leading up to Jesus and Bethlehem was precisely conceived as a human superhero, someone with the earthly muscle to bang heads together and purge the world of evil by morally superior muscles.

Even John the Baptist expected the messiah to come with that kind of power. His concern was justice, repentance, asceticism. He warned people of an approaching time of reckoning and expected the longed-for messiah to come precisely as a violent fire, a winnowing fan that would separate the bad from the good and burn up the former with a righteousness that came straight from God.

When he heard reports of Jesus gently inviting sinners in rather than casting them off, John was scandalized. That kind of a messiah didn't fit his expectations, or his preaching. That's why Jesus, in sending a response to him, invited John not to be scandalized in him. John hadn't wanted a gentle, vulnerable, peace-preaching messiah. He wanted bad people punished, not converted. But, to his credit, once he saw how Jesus' power worked, he understood, accepted a deeper truth, stepped back in self-effacement, and pointed people in Jesus' direction with the words: He must increase and I must decrease. I'm not even worthy to untie his sandal strap!

We too are slow to understand. Like John the Baptist, our impatience for truth and justice makes us want and expect a messiah who comes in earthly terms, all talent and muscle, banging heads together so as to rid the planet of falsehood and evil. We want the kind of messiah we see at the end of every Hollywood thriller: Mother Theresa turned into Sylvester Stallone or Bruce Willis as I write this, beating up the bad guys with a violence they can only envy.

But that's not the Christmas story, nor the power revealed in it. An infant lying in the straw in Bethlehem didn't out-gun anyone. He just lay there, waiting for anyone good or bad to come to him, see his helplessness, feel a tug at his or her heart strings, and then gently try to coax a smile or a word out of him.

That's still how God meets us.

Ron Rolheiser

Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Currently, Father Rolheiser is serving as President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio Texas. He can be contacted through his web site, www.ronrolheiser.com.

PARISH DIARY FOR THIS WEEK

Day	Date	Time	Event
Sun.	08/12/19		St Vincent de Paul Appeal
		9:30am	Kidz Word at St Gerard's Church
		10:15am	Kidz Word at OLHC Church
		6:00pm	PMR Carlingford Antioch meeting Christmas Party 15th December see pg. 5
Mon	09/12/19	9:30am	Communion Service at St Gerard's
		7:30am	PMR Carlingford SVdP Meeting
		7:30pm	St Gerard's Rosary Group in the Church
Tue.	10/12/19	12:15pm	Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church
		7:00pm	St Gerard's Church Adult Choir Practice
Wed.	11/12/19	9:15am	Communion Service at Epping
		9:30am	Mass at St Gerard's Church
		10:30am	Funeral at Epping—Alexander Steuerwald
Thur.	12/12/19	6:00pm	Yr. 6 Graduation Mass at Epping
		9:30am	Mass at St Gerard's Church
		11:00am	Mass at the Poplars Nursing Home
		12:15am	Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church
Fri.	13/12/19	6:00pm	Yr. 6 Graduation at St Gerard's Church
		9:30am	Mass at St Gerard's Church
		10:10am	PMR Carlingford Scripture Reflection
		12:15pm	Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church
Sat.	14/12/19	4:30pm	CH Epping Rosary for the Immaculate Heart of Mary
		7:00pm	PH Cana Youth Group meeting
		9:15am	Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church
		9:45am	Exposition and Benediction
		10:15am	Benediction
		5:00pm	Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians' Church
		5:00pm	Reconciliation at St Gerard's Church
		6:00pm	Mass at St Gerard's Church

PH—Parish Hall, CH—Church, PMR— Parish Meeting Room

PARISH STAFF

Parish Secretary:
Dennis Porteous Ph.: 9876 2853
Email: dennis@eppcarl.org.au

Asst. Parish Secretary:
Maree Balzalat Ph.: 9876 2853
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Pastoral Care Assistant:
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Email: maree@eppcarl.org.au

**Parish Support Worker (PSW)
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Children's Ministries**
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Sacramental Programme Assistant:
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Ph.: 0407 255 593
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Pastoral Support Worker (PSW) Youth:
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Email: joanna@eppcarl.org.au

Missionary Discipleship Coordinator:
Denis McNamara
Ph.: 0410 041 944
Email: denis.mcnamara@eppcarl.org.au

Parish Pastoral Council
If you have any questions, comments or feedback for the Parish Pastoral Council then please send an email to ppsecretary@eppcarl.org.au

Advent Wreath For Those Who Mourn

The link is:
bereavementsupport@catholiccemeteries.com.au

Carols in the Park 2019 Sunday, 8th December

Together, the combined churches of Carlingford and Epping are excited to host this year's Carols in the Park 2019!

Come along for an evening of fun and frivolity, celebrating Christmas, and sharing in the joy of community!

Market Stalls open at 5pm,
Carols start at 7:15pm,
Fireworks at 9pm,
and a special guest performance by 2017's Toyota Star Maker, Rachael Fahim!

Come along, bring the family, and find out what Christmas is all about!



2019 CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Commencing 7th December

HELP A FAMILY PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE AT CHRISTMAS

Our Lady Help of Christians Epping: Envelopes on the pews and at Church entrances to be returned to the paper table or placed on the second collection.

St. Gerard Majella Carlingford: Envelopes on the pews to be returned to the Piety Store or on the second collection.

Receipts will be available for tax purposes.

Your Gift Can Help End the Pain of Poverty!

Children's Liturgy of the Word – We NEED you!

Children's Liturgy (Kidz Word) is an age-appropriate Liturgy of the Word offered at the 9:30am Sunday Mass at Carlingford and the 10:15am Mass at Epping during school terms. The presiding Priest calls forward the authorised adult leaders and children just after the Collect (Opening Prayer). The children are invited to go on a little "pilgrimage" with the leaders to the parish meeting room to celebrate the Gospel.

During Kidz Word, the leaders lead the children through prayers, songs/mimes and readings. The children reflect on the same Scripture readings as the rest of the assembly. They are taught a simplified message of the readings and are encouraged to share that message with their family and friends after Mass.



Adult or youth volunteers are needed to lead Kidz Word each week, as well as to assist with the supervision of the children. This is a great opportunity for adults and middle/high school/uni youth to help these eager youngsters celebrate God's Word. A Working with Children's Check will be required, which we can assist you with. Training will also be provided before you begin and you can be assured you are always part of a team!

If you would like to help bring this meaningful ministry to life so God's Word can reach the hearts of our young children, please contact the parish office on 9876 2853 or email me at lynn@eppcarl.org.au We look forward to hearing from you!

Lynn Siau
Sacramental Programmes & Children's Ministries
0407 255 593
lynn@eppcarl.org.au

ANGEL TREE 2019



If you have forgotten to bring the gift for the "Angel Tree" this weekend, could you please do so by next weekend 14th/15th December at the latest, so that they can be delivered in time for Christmas. Thank you for your support this year, and please pray for the children, parents and carers this Christmas

Margaret Wiseman

EPHING HEALING MASS



Marie Herd, and Genevieve and team.

All are welcome to our monthly Healing Masses (on the 1st Thursday of the month at Carlingford and the 3rd Wednesday of the month at Epping) as a time to pray for God's healing strength either for ourselves or those we know. Each third month (Mar, Jun, Sep and Dec) we also celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick (Anointing) within these Masses.

Alpha begins Tuesday 3 March 2020



Our first task ~ please pray for all who will be blessed by Alpha for Alpha relies on the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire. Nothing happens without the Holy Spirit and everything happens with the Holy Spirit. Fr Peter asks us to pray to the Holy Spirit for us to be missionary, to go out to others and invite them to Alpha. We also pray for the Holy Spirit to move the hearts of people to come.

The Holy Spirit works through a team of people committed to their guests. These hosts and helpers and the hospitality Task Force are being called to join the team that makes Alpha available at Epping. Alpha begins on Tuesday 3 March in 2020.

Come Holy Spirit, fill us with your love, use us to witness to your love and show us who to invite to experience your love.

The Initiation process for Adults: Why people want to know about Catholicism

Q Why do people come to inquire about being initiated? What brings them to us?

- A** The Holy Spirit leads people to us in many ways.
- Perhaps they wish to worship with their spouse, who is an active Catholic, or they are preparing to marry a Catholic.
 - Perhaps they have been drawn by the Church's teachings or its service to the world.
 - A Catholic relative or friend may have set an inspiring example.
 - Parents whose children attend Catholic schools and are preparing for sacraments may feel encouraged to participate in Catholic life with them.
 - A crisis or turning point in life (in one's health, family or workplace) may prompt a desire to seek God.
 - Significant public events, such as war, disaster, a Church celebration, or the encouraging words of a great Church leader like Pope Francis, may kindle a spiritual awakening.



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Advent Wreath For Those Who Mourn

Go to:
bereavementsupport@catholiccemeteries.com.au

Rosary for the Intentions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The rosary for the intentions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be recited every Friday afternoon at 4:30pm in Our Lady Help of Christians' Church. You are most welcome to join us.



Youth Page

OUR PARISH ANTIOCH COMMUNITY

Antioch youth are having a Christmas party and we want to invite you!

Anyone between year 10 up to 22 year old is welcome to join. And bring a friend along!

Date: From 6pm, 15th December (Sunday)

Location: St Gerard's Parish Meeting Room
543 North Rocks Rd, Carlingford

Theme: Christmas! And bring a secret Santa present.

RSVP: Joanna on 0404 710 588 by the 8th December
So we can cater for food.

Review of Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible

*The Bible was on the back burner for me, for too long. Over 130 people attended part of the program, **Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible**, in the parish meeting rooms and in small groups. Jeff Cavins presented the narrative of the Bible in 12 periods of history. Each received a workbook and read sections of the Bible in each period to prepare themselves to understand the talk on video and take part in the discussion.*

Many of those who went to the 8-week program in October and November, filled in a survey of what they found personally helpful. They rated *the talks by the presenter, Jeff Cavins*, and the *small group discussions*, as excellent or good. Their comments in the survey are in italics and grouped around their experience.

*The whole idea was to **make the Bible simple, interesting and absolutely appealing**: for beginners, for those short on time and even those lacking motivation. It was beneficial, it was enjoyable. I admired how Jeff presented the Bible for laypeople. Very insightful, I did not want it to end.*

*There was **a wonderful sense of community**. The group became close and talked very openly about the impact of reading the Bible. I loved it! Just to relate to others & hear their faith journey was eye opening. I enjoyed listening to everyone sharing the faith. Inspiring! And getting to know parishioners who you see at Mass but not know their name.*

Some noted they received a "Workbook" and did "Homework".

*Preparing was **a challenge**. It required hard work and repeat reading. This was worthwhile. As a result of the whole exercise I now feel better equipped to speak about and meditate on the Old Testament. I learnt new insights into the Old Testament how God made a series of agreements called covenants with the people of Israel. I learnt how harsh life was for the people of those times & the patience & love God had for his people, never giving up on them. It was great.*

The survey feedback expressed the benefits received.

*I now have a **better understanding** of the Gospel and the readings at Mass. I'm eager to read the Bible. The most important thing for me was to prioritise how much more I need to uphold my faith and pass this legacy of faith to my children.*

CANA: OUR Yr. 7-9 YOUTH GROUP

If you're in Years 7-9 come along for a night Jam-packed with **FUN & FAITH! EVERY FRIDAY** night of the School Term,
7:30 - 9pm,
in the Parish hall at Carlingford.
It's a great place to catch up with old friends,
and meet some new ones!

Please remember that a small donation when you come to the meeting would really help out with the costs of the night. Thanks

Enquiries to Joanna Mak
0404 710 588

*It filled me with motivation & enough knowledge to read the Bible on my own. I want to join Bible studies in the future. I told my family and friends and **shared the great journey I was on**; learning how to unlock the mystery of the Bible. They all expressed interest and wished they could have this opportunity.*

Fr Peter will offer more Bible study. This Advent, you can read the reflections on the daily readings at Mass in the booklet **The Way** at the back of the Church.

You can join the group to **read Luke's Gospel** by sending a text '24' to 0435 031 848 (Leon) This group began reading the 24 chapters on December 1st and finish on Christmas Eve. You will be encouraged by others reflecting on Jesus life.

Denis McNamara

Supporting Missionary Disciples

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Gracious God, you call us, your disciples in Broken Bay to be the face of Jesus to the world, to care and evangelise in his name.

Through your Spirit, you call us all, to serve you in many forms of Christian discipleship.

We ask you particularly at this time to call forth individual believers to serve your disciples in Broken Bay in our lay ecclesial ministries, in religious life, in diaconate and in priesthood.

May we be a Church where generosity, dedication and passion are called forth and nurtured.

May we be a Church where we can listen for your voice in a noisy world, and respond with faith and hope.

We ask you this through the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, Christ, our Lord. Amen